

Seven Maps of Rain & Sunlight

~T. Birch

1.
The gerber baby's talking
with her hands - it's so exciting
in the breeze of passing cars -

and mama's stealing down the sidewalk
with her undone hair, amazed
by all she hears and sees.

2.
She used to go naked in winter.
She used to go down on snow like the sand,
her tongue dancing along,

but she never once swallowed
what she had saved. Dripping and white
were her kisses - a different perfume.

3.
Daddy, Daddy - I don't blame
your crooked sunsets,
I don't blame you for the spider webs,

or crickets in my sleep
jumping from my leg to chest to cheek.
I do fault what you gave.

4.
April begets January, January begets June.
June is too busy with marriage,
July is too soon.

March can't decide what's the hurry
while August plots against May.
December knows it's all been arranged.

5.
He cannot stop whining at damselfly ways.
Sees her rollercoaster affection
as something depraved.

She burns the toast and his sausage
trying to please.
Who plays the jailer, and who's the hostage?

6.
She called him bastard, savior, enemy
when he came to her with silks
and skinny hips.

He called her nothing she didn't speak
of herself alone at night.
Filthy slut. Little peach.

7.
Face away from the wind.
He was taking my hand as a bird.
A shivered heart beat -

fractured wing. Hair tickling
each and each.

A slender grip in crisp sunlight.



You who were here so sudden
And already gone –

I find an image of you
In the flowering trees

That mark the sign
Of Carolina springtime – by the time

I notice them
Already the pavement

Littered with curled rolling petals

~Jack Anders